

OMEGA-NET Training school:

Non-standard Employment, Work Environment and Health

A sociological account of non-standard employment

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Lecture outline

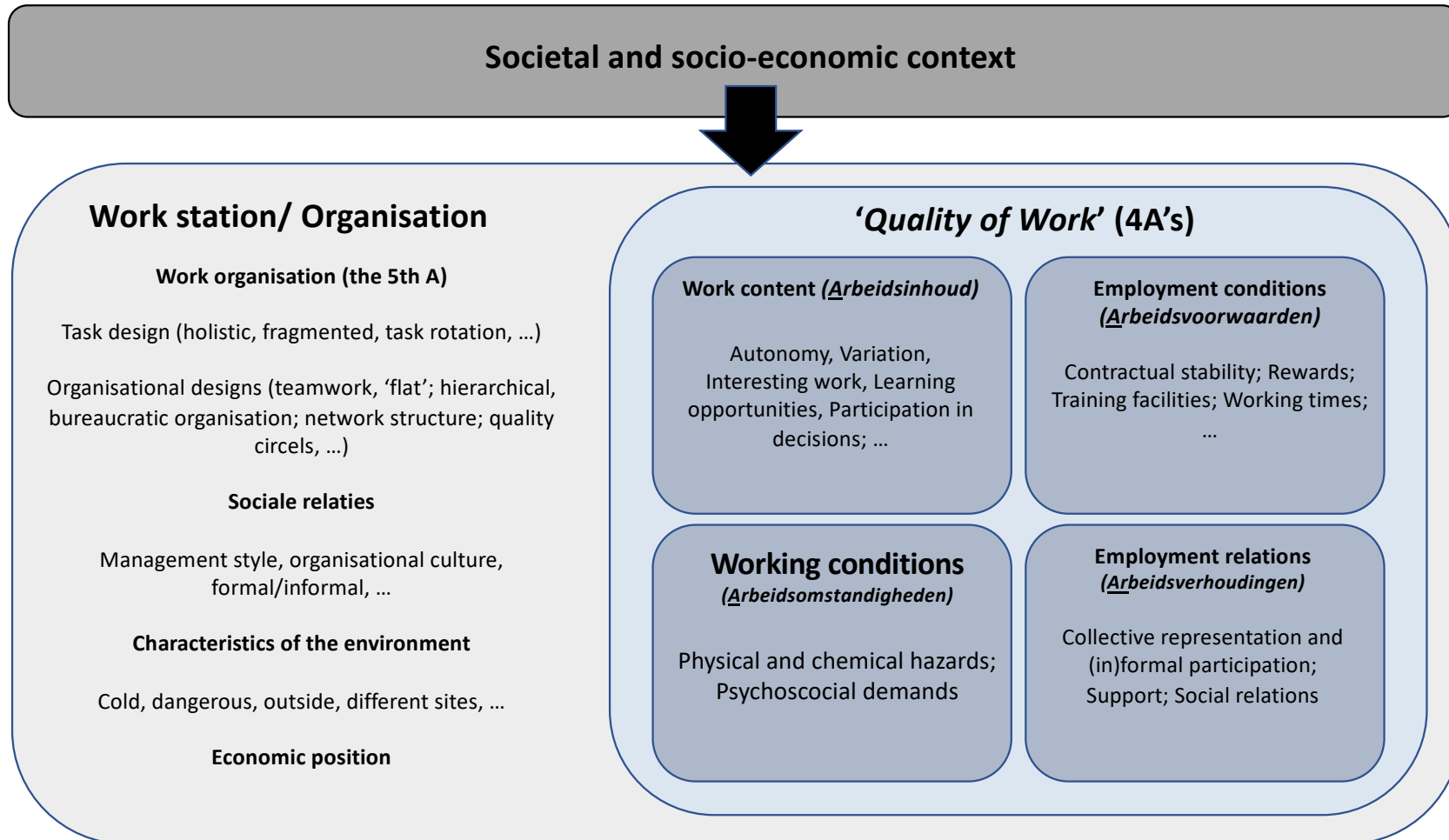
- Defining ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’
 - Situating into wider Job Quality
 - What is standard (The SER)?
 - What is non-standard?
- Explaining de-standardisation/drivers
 - Demand-side
 - Supply side of labour
 - Role of trade unions
 - Role of the state
- How to account for non-standard
 - Short overview of types of approaches
 - The employment quality model as an elaboration of EPRES
- A progressive future policy agenda

Selected reading

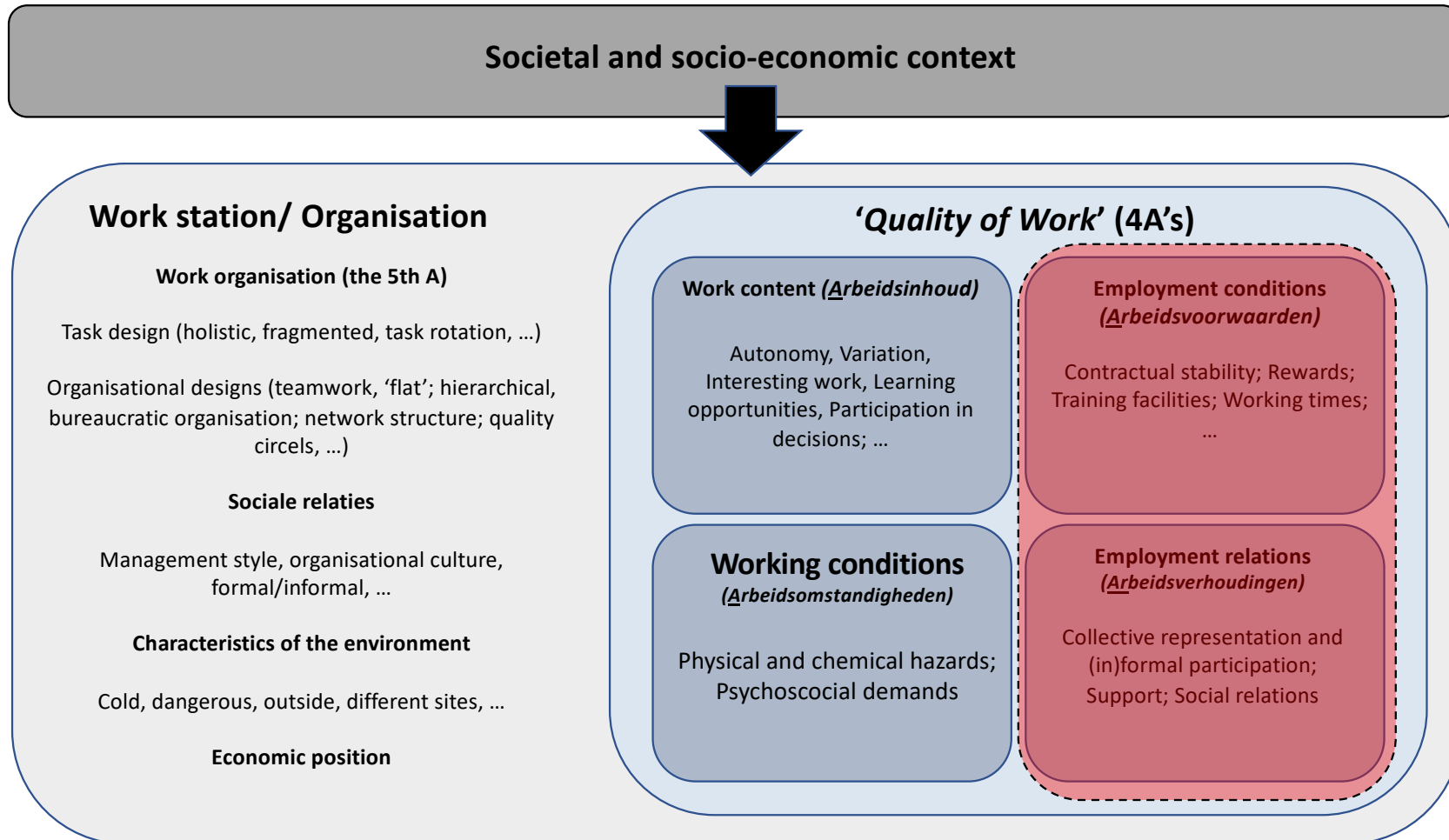
- Carré, F. (2016). Destandardization: Qualitative and Quantitative. In S. Edgell, H. Gottfried, & E. Granter (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of the Sociology of Work and Employment* (pp. 129-147). London: Sage Publications.
- Vanroelen, C., Julià, M., & Van Aerden, K. (2021). Precarious Employment: An Overlooked Determinant of Workers' Health and Well-Being? In *Flexible Working Practices and Approaches* (pp. 231–255). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74128-0_12

The concept of Job Quality

The Quality of Work



The Quality of Work



The Standard Employment Relationship

The standard employment relation

- Model compatible with mass-production, bureaucratic model of organisation
 - Standardized, predictable and stable production processes
 - Competition for reliable workers (male, autochthonous breadwinner)
 - Strong and nationally organised collective labour
 - Nationally oriented mass consumer market
 - Keynesian macro-economic politics
- ‘Stable, socially protected, highly institutionalized, full-time employment in one single organisation’
 - Mandatory minimal employment conditions
 - Internal labour market careers
 - Controlled (and compensated) flexibility
 - Derived ‘entitlements’
- Above all strong ‘mental frame’
 - Discussion on extent of actual generalisation
 - Geographical and sectorial contingencies
 - Connection with patriarchal model of production and reproduction
 - Historical ‘anomaly’

The standard employment relation

- Advantages for employees
 - Sustainable (increasing) family wage
 - Social wage through derived entitlements (de-commodification)
 - Sustained employability through ILM career
 - Social redistribution through institutionalised system of pay scales, negotiated wage increases, progressive taxing, social protection
- Advantages for employers
 - Stability and social consensus
 - Synergy with needs of Fordist production model
 - Personnel planning in stable market situation

The standard employment relation

Standard Employment Relation (SER):

- Key term = **security** (Standing, 2011)
 - Job security
 - Security of income
 - Security of rights and social protection
 - Working time security
 - Security of future employment/employability
 - Security of representation (participation)

The SER became a “golden standard” ... however, difficult to maintain ... and ‘under attack’:

- Changing balance of power
- Polarisation
- Flexibilisation and de-standardising, most ‘harmful’ at the bottom

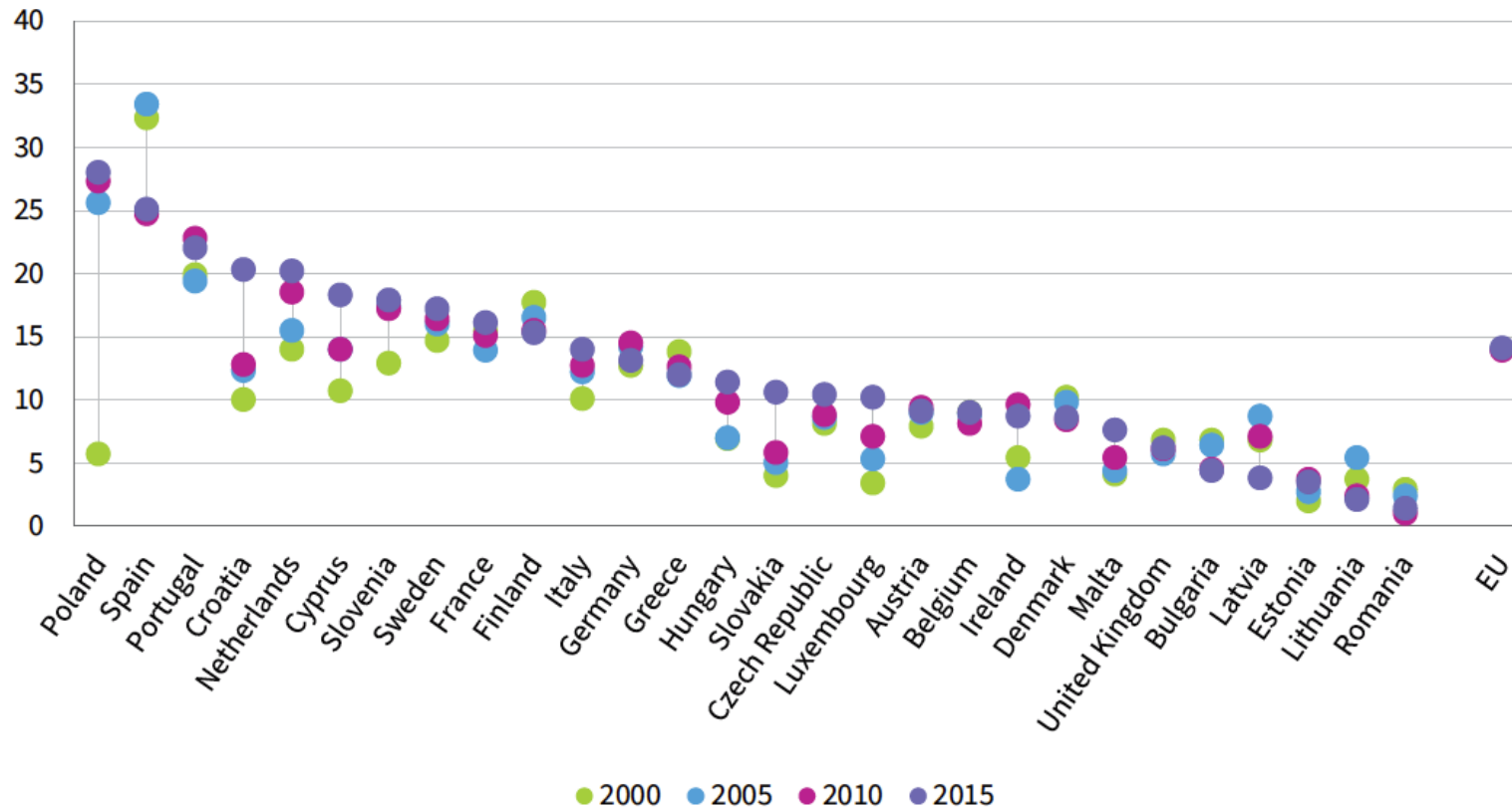
What is non-standard?

What is non-standard?

- Broad and narrow definitions
- Core dimensions:
 - Contractual
 - Short/fixed term, on call, freelance, probation, ...
 - Triadic contracts (TAW, posting)
 - Shift of 'market risk' from employer to worker (agency)
 - Temporal
 - Amount (part-time, overtime work)
 - Deviation from 9-5 norm (night, weekend, ...)
 - Fluctuation – irregularity (shifts)
 - Predictability (on call)
 - Spatial
 - TAW-models
 - Inter-firm networks sharing a site
 - System of bargaining
 - Attachment to institutionalized system of collective bargaining
 - Individual or 'informal' models

Temporary employment

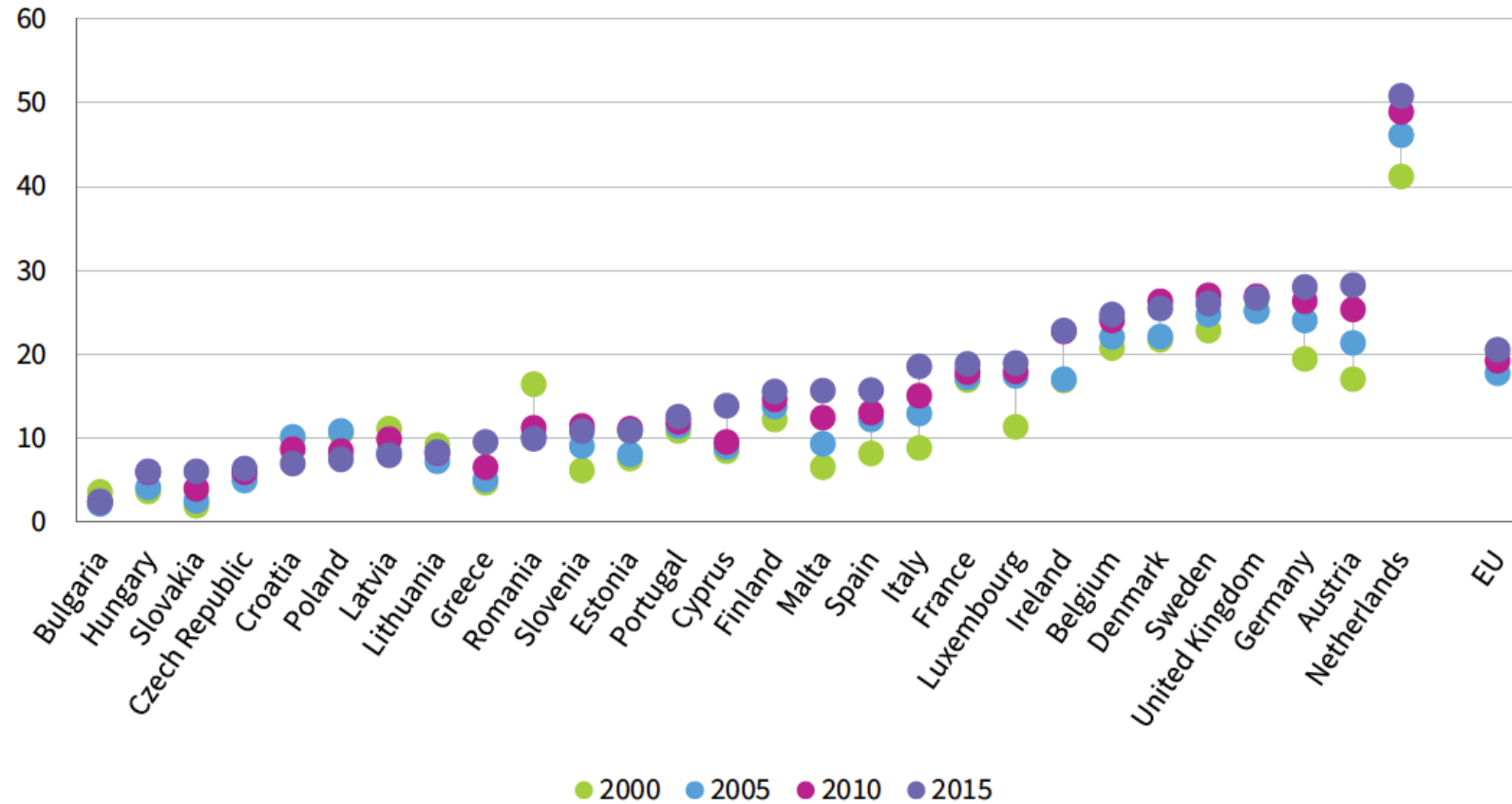
Figure 2: Temporary employment in Member States and the EU as percentage of total dependent employment, 2000–2015



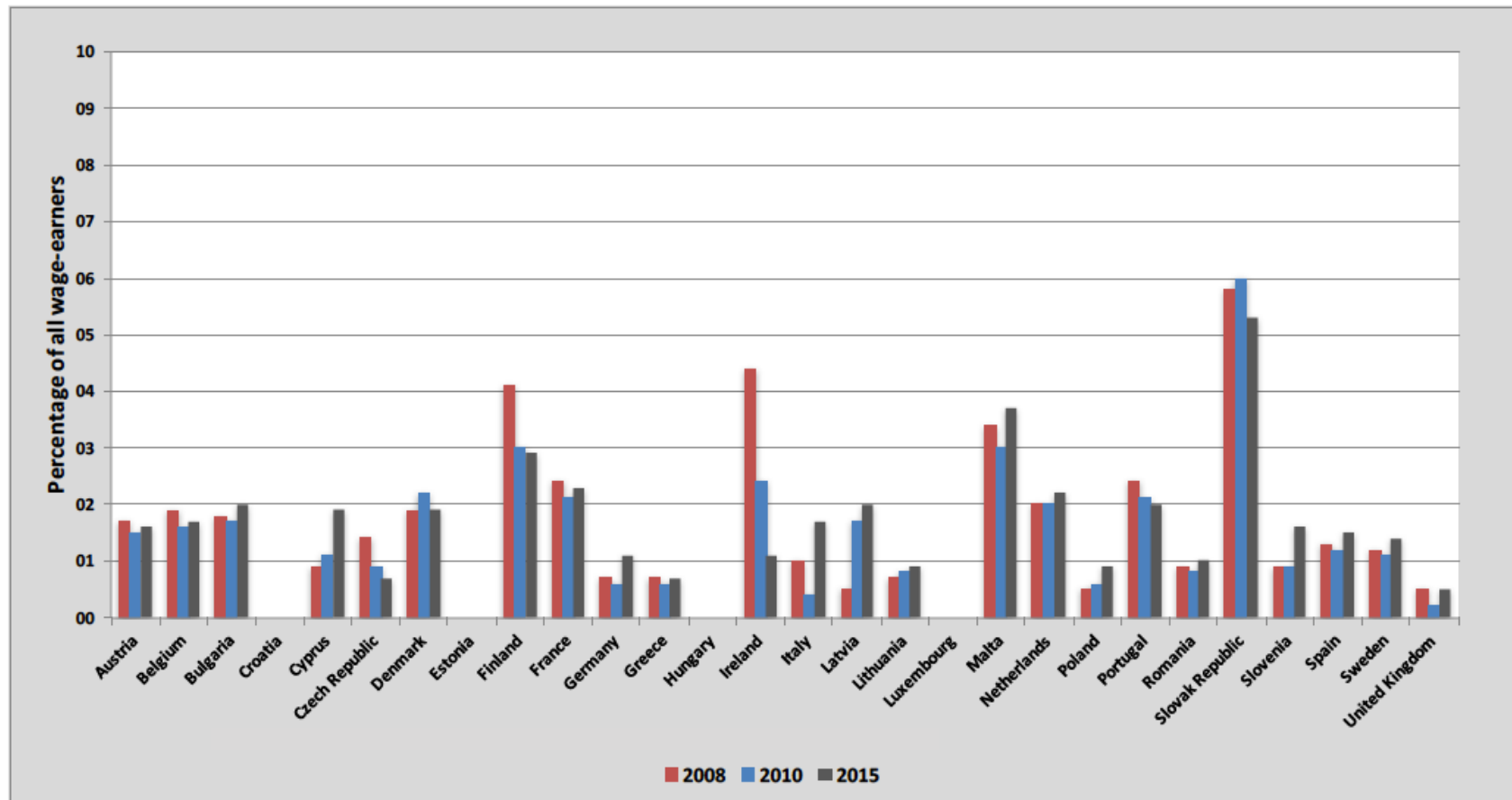
Source: EU-LFS, Eurostat

Part-time employment

Figure 4: Part-time employment in Member States and the EU as percentage of total dependent employment, 2000–2015

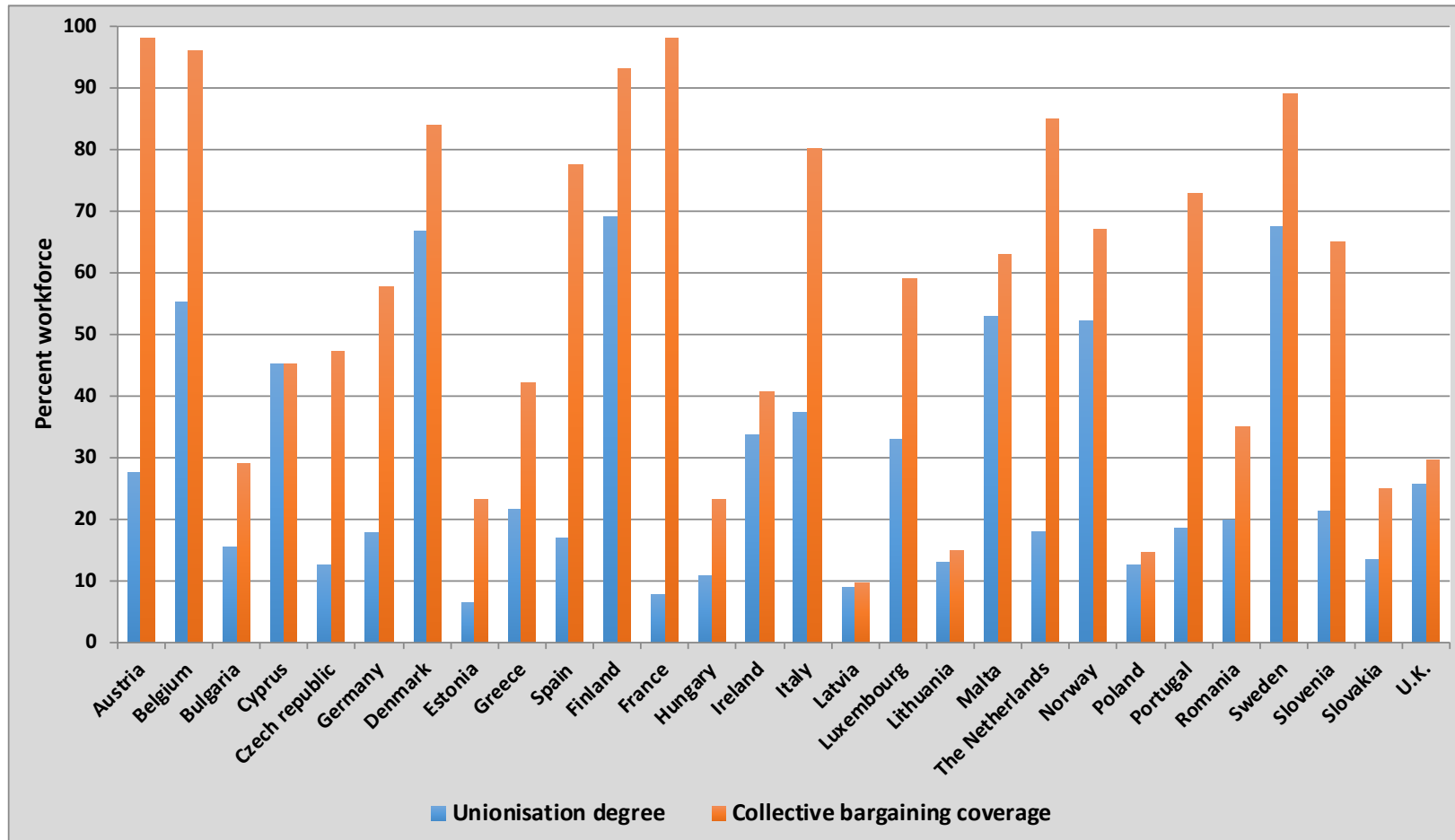


Temporary agency work



Source: EUROSTAT, 2017

Collective representation



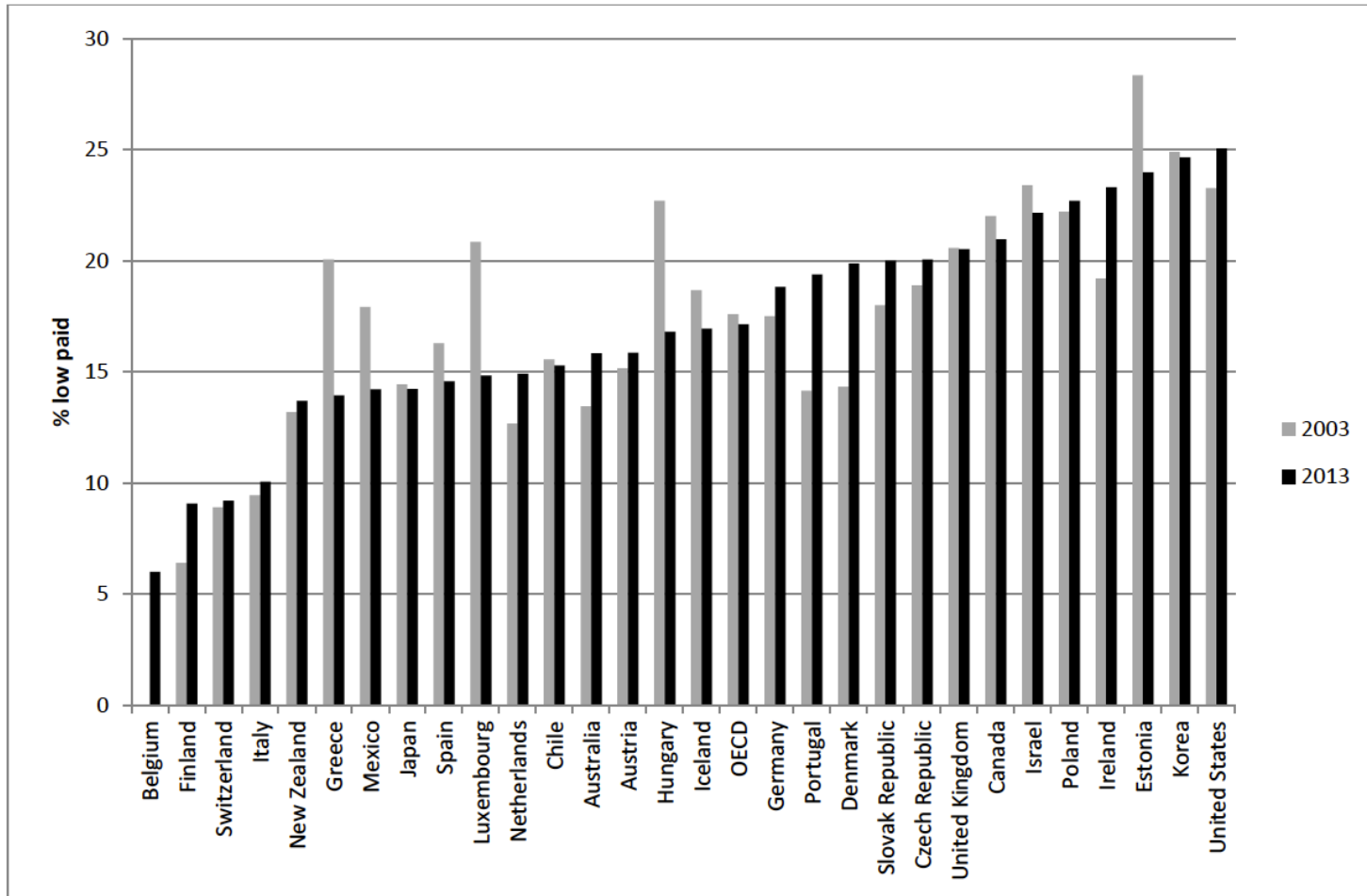
Source: Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies (AIAS), 2016

What is non-standard?

- ‘Derived’ dimensions:
 - Stability and sustainability of Income
 - Income fluctuations in case of TAW,
 - Income sustainability in case of part-time (second job, household, other sources)
 - Statutory rights and benefits
 - Connection between ‘SER-model’ and social protection (pension) and legal entitlements (parental leave)
 - Employability
 - (Breach of) ILM-career
 - (Lack of) investments
 - Interpersonal relations with hierarchy
 - Type of ‘psychological contract’
 - Informal or procedural models participation, conflict solution, ...

Unsustainable income

Figure 1.1 Share of full-time employees earning less than two-thirds median earnings



Source: OECD.Stat

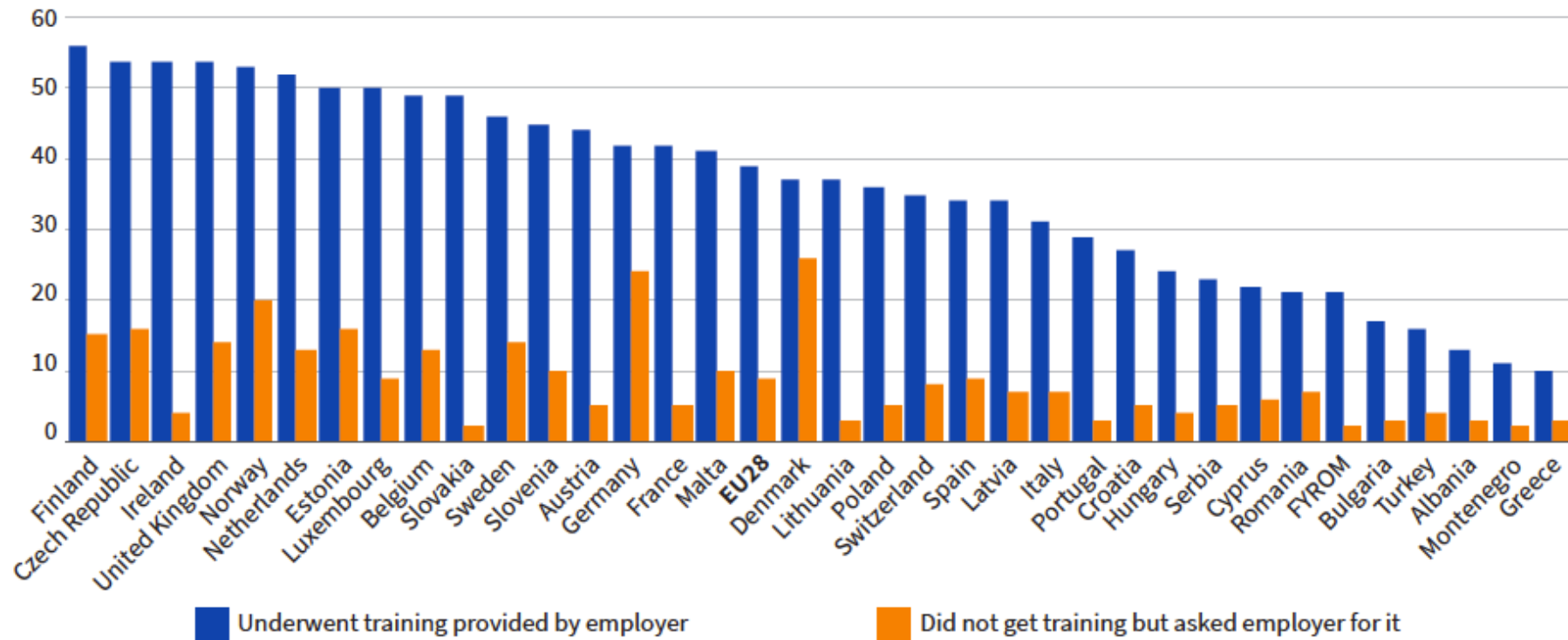
Screenshot

Source: McKnight et al, 2016

Access to training

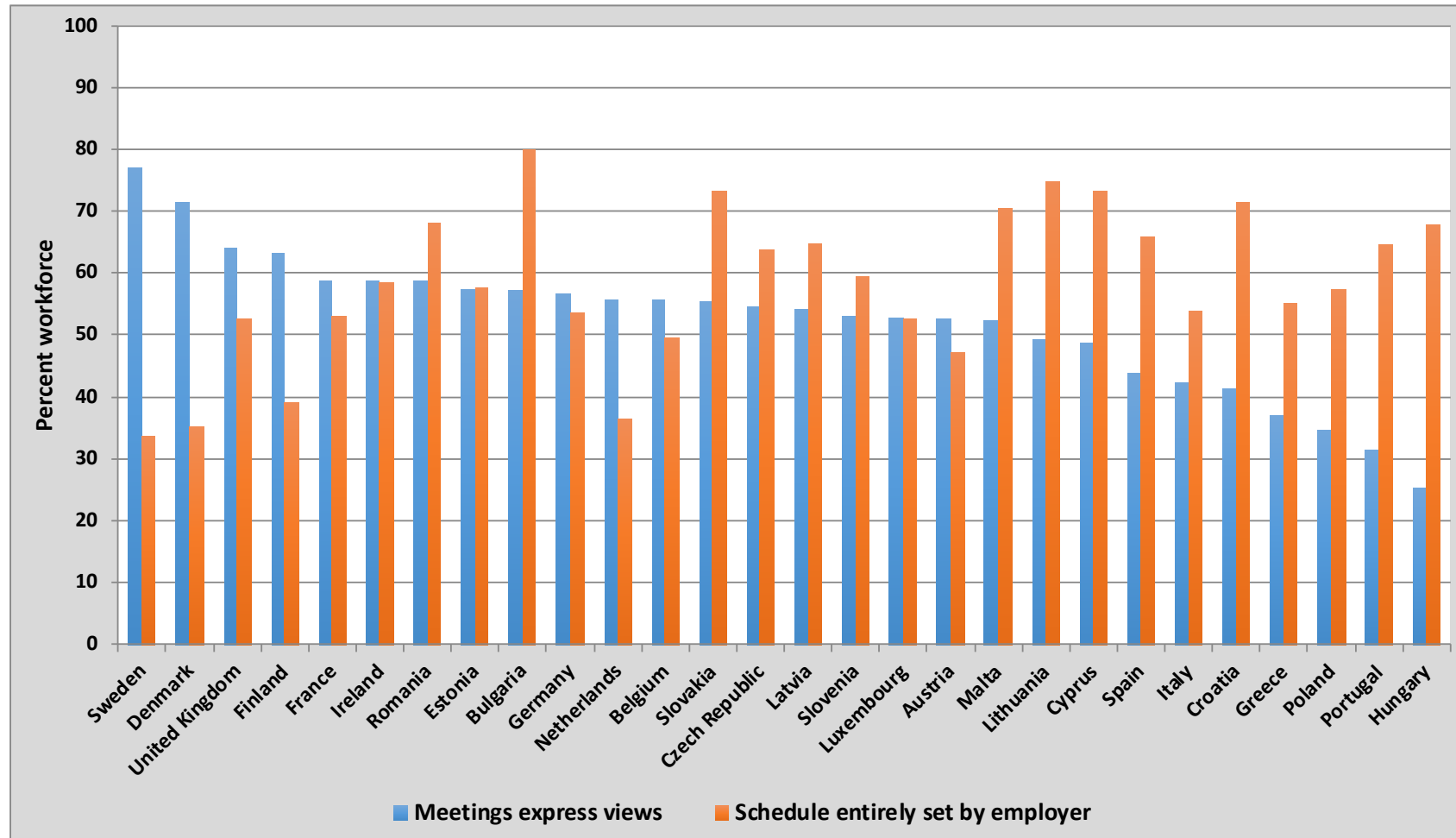
training

Figure 70: Access to employer-provided training, by country (% of employees)



Source: EUROFOUND. (2016). Sixth European Working Conditions Survey – Overview report. Luxembourg

Relations with hierarchy



Source: EUROFOUND, EWCS2015, own calculations

Other forms of de-standardisation

- Platform work, gig-work
 - Report CEPS: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/study-to-gather-evidence-on-the-working-conditions-of-platform-workers/>
 - Report ETUI: <https://www.etui.org/publications/platform-economy-europe>
- Posted work – outsourcing – intra-European labour migration
 - Video on posted work: <https://www.euronews.com/2017/09/28/posted-workers-facing-harsh-realities?jwsourc=cl>
- The ‘extra-workforce’: e.g. multiple job holding, moonlighting, student work, work on top of pension, various degrees of part-time, ...
- Bogus self-employment
- Various forms and extents of informal work/employment
 - Short film: Waiting Working Hours (Ben De Raes, 2019)
 - (<https://www.serendipityfilms.be/waiting-working-hours>)
- Working consumers (G. Ritzer: the prosumer)
 - <https://youtu.be/4IY51oAdZ-E>
 - <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/increasing-importance-of-working-consumers-impact-on-paid-workers/>

Drivers of de-standardisation (explaining)

Employers: labour market demand

- Demand driven (inter-related factors)
 - Long-standing trends: changing mode of production
 - Economic globalisation fuelled by multilateral trade agreements, financial deregulation/internationalisation, technological innovation
 - Loss of political power of 'labour' – 'neo-liberal turn'
 - Result: competition based on cost-cutting, with primary focus on labour costs
 - Pressure from new 'owners structures'
 - Generalisation of shareholder model – Role of institutional financial capital
 - Push towards 'super profits', so cost-cutting
 - Major criterion in executive rewards systems

Employers: labour market demand

- Demand driven (inter-related factors)
 - Organisational and management models
 - Managerial orientation towards 'core competences'
 - 'Fissuring' – production via business-to-business relations in inter-firm network
 - Core firm converges to 'lean model' (core competences, orchestrating)
 - 'Satellites' performing 'peripheral activities' (cleaning, catering, HR, logistics, IT, ...)
 - Note: guest lecture David Weil - <https://youtu.be/5wzxfDiWp08>
 - Motivations:
 - Efficiency – specialisation (Coase, 1991)
 - Cost-cutting (breaking ILM's, profit/wage squeezing in outer rings)
 - 'Solar system' with implications world wide (global division of work)

'Mother companies' and their 'solar system'

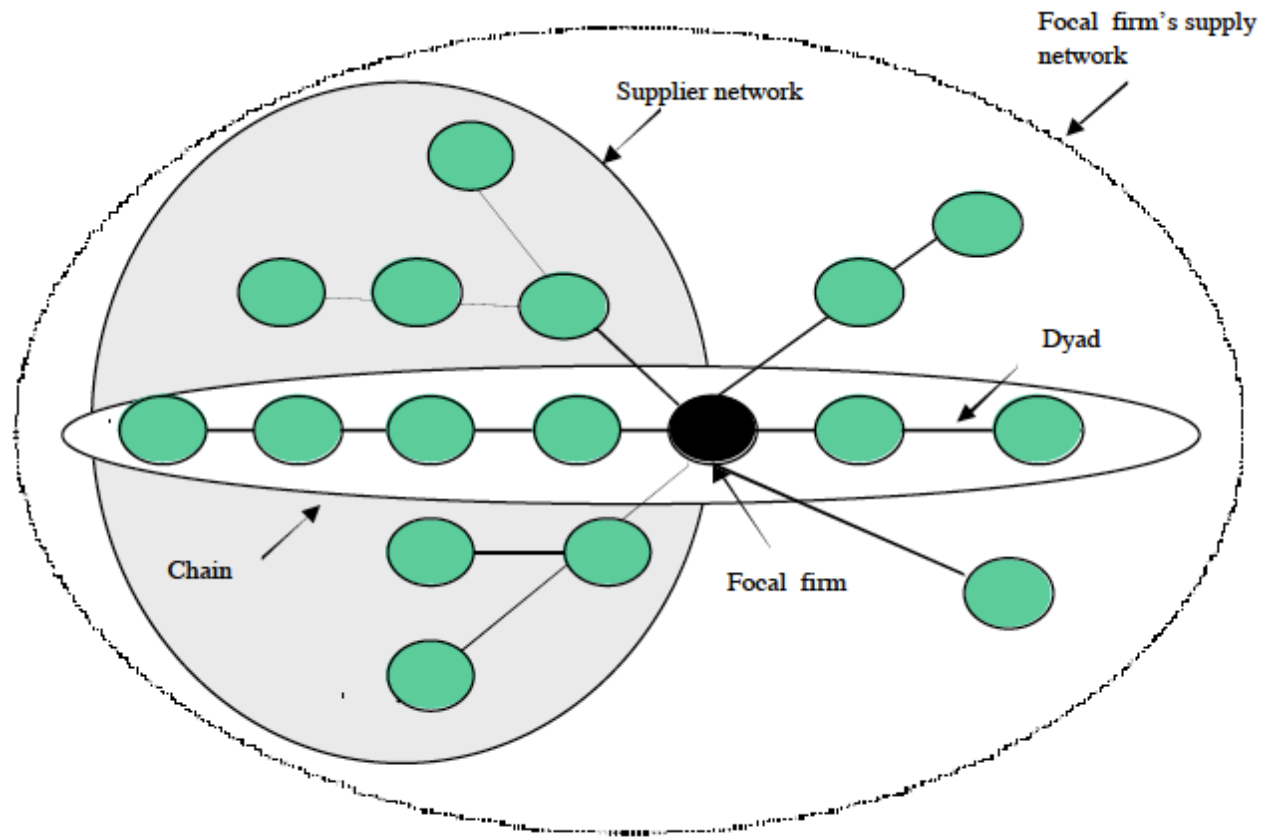


Fig. 4. The operations network of the focal firm (modified from Zheng et al. 1999).

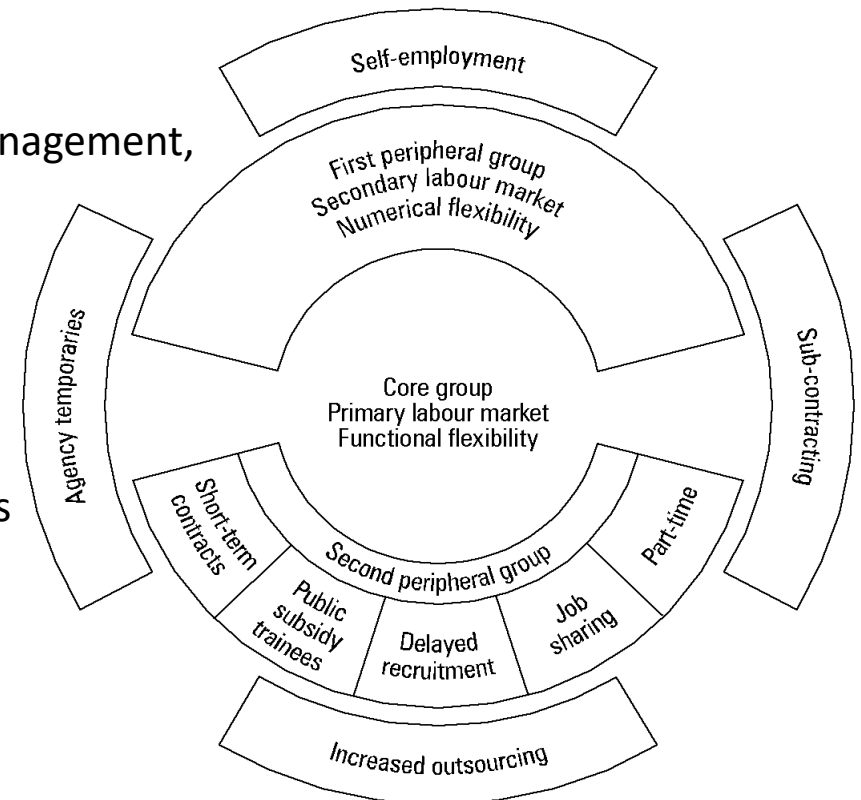
Bron: Lehtinen, U. (2001). *Changing subcontracting – a study on the evolution of supply chains and subcontractors*. University of Oulu.

Consequences for working conditions Weil, D. (2014). *The Fissured Workplace. Why work became so bad for so many and what can be done to improve it?*

Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (<https://www.fissuredworkplace.net>)

Employers: labour market demand

- Demand driven (inter-related factors)
 - ICT-revolution
 - Major enabling factor
 - Coordinating outsourcing, logistics and inventory management, global communication, ...
 - Algorithmic matching of labour supply and demand
 - Coordinating of 'gigs' (small chunks of labour)
 - Increasing 'opportunities' for evasion
 - Legal recognition of non-standard employment forms enabled evasion
 - Fragmentation of work sites hinders control (the flexible firm model)



Source: Atkinson, 1984

The workers: labour market supply

- Supply-driven
 - Work forces with limited bargaining power
 - Youth, new arrivals, non-unionized, lower skilled, ...
 - 'Activated' unemployed, disabled, ...
 - Workers with constrained options
 - Gendered division of productive and reproductive labour
 - Workers seeking 'partial integration'
 - 'Erosion' of income replacement schemes (e.g. pension)
 - Students, tourists, ...
 - The 'scrabble economy'

The workers: labour market supply

- Supply-driven

- Changing work orientations
 - Compatibility with other life spheres
 - The ‘entrepreneurial spirit’: Me™
 - Internalising and embracing Flexibility as ‘new normal’, life style

- Aggregate level:

- ‘Slack labour market’ (reserve army)
- Perverse effects: desired flexible options for ‘outsiders’, create downward pressure on the ‘insiders’

Article

Work and Identity in an Era of Precarious Employment: How Workers Respond to “Personal Branding” Discourse

Steven P. Vallas¹ and Angèle Christin²

Work and Occupations
2018, Vol. 45(1) 3–37
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DOI: 10.1177/0730888417735662
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The state

- Neither enabling, nor fully countering:
 - The role of the state
 - Indirect impact
 - Regulating contextual factors (social protection, immigration, gender roles and reproductive sphere, educational system, ...)
 - Setting institutional context for socio-economic policies (e.g. role of social partners, courts, ...)
 - Direct impact
 - Thin line between 'enabling' and 'protecting':
 - Setting possibilities answering market demands (framework for gig economy, agency work, freelancing, ...)
 - Setting a 'minimum floor' (e.g. equal work, equal pay clauses)
 - General push towards flexibilization
 - International competition, unemployment and employment rates, social expenses, poverty reduction, ...
 - Set of core 'beliefs', often challenged
 - The state as an employer (embracing de-standardisation or not?)

Trade unions

- Neither enabling, nor fully countering:
 - Trade unions
 - Complicated, even ambiguous position
 - Less representative among 'new work force', more among 'insiders'
 - 3 types of positions:
 - Strategical utilization (i.e. protecting the insiders)
 - De-standardisation and precarisation in Europe's CME's taking shape as a dualization process
 - 'Productivity alliance' between unions-employers → protecting insiders, cultivating periphery
 - Objecting – prohibiting
 - Using social action, institutions and political alliances to obstruct de-regulation
 - e.g.: limiting use of temporary agency workforce, protecting occupations' status, ...
 - Condition: inclusive and encompassing trade unions and institutions, strong 'worker identities'
 - Regulating (e.g. seeking equal standards, control of abuse, ...)
 - Fits with flexicurity agenda – EU policies
 - New, disruptive productive models (e.g. gig economy, posted workers, ...)
 - Rear-guard action?

Trade unions: the virtuous circle



Figure 1.1. The 'virtuous circle' associated with sustaining low levels of precarity

Source: Doellgast, Lillie, and Pulignano, 2018

Polarisation and changing balance of power

Employees (top):

- Technology as a source of opportunities and autonomy
- New organisational models (flatter, small scale, *boundaryless*)
- Investment in scarce skills
- Strategic tasks, high added-value → individual power
- Task-based work (autonomy and responsibility)

Employees (lower-middle):

- Technology as a source of automizing, standardizing, optimisation and control,
- New organisational models (franchising, sub-contracting, offshoring, privatizing, ...)
- Less scarce skills → competition, low investment
- Fragmenting worker population and organisations → fragmenting trade unions
- Remaining dominance of working times and control



Created by b farias
from Noun Project

Employers:

- Free trade and globalisation as adjustment variables
- Deregulation and flexibilization of the labour market, investment policies and organisational structures
- Political choices: competition policies, (semi-)privatising of public sector, increasing conditionality of social protection
- Technology as facilitator (outsourcing, logistic, automatisisation, control, ...)

The Transformation of Work



INTERFACE
DEMOGRAPHY
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Measuring de-standardisation

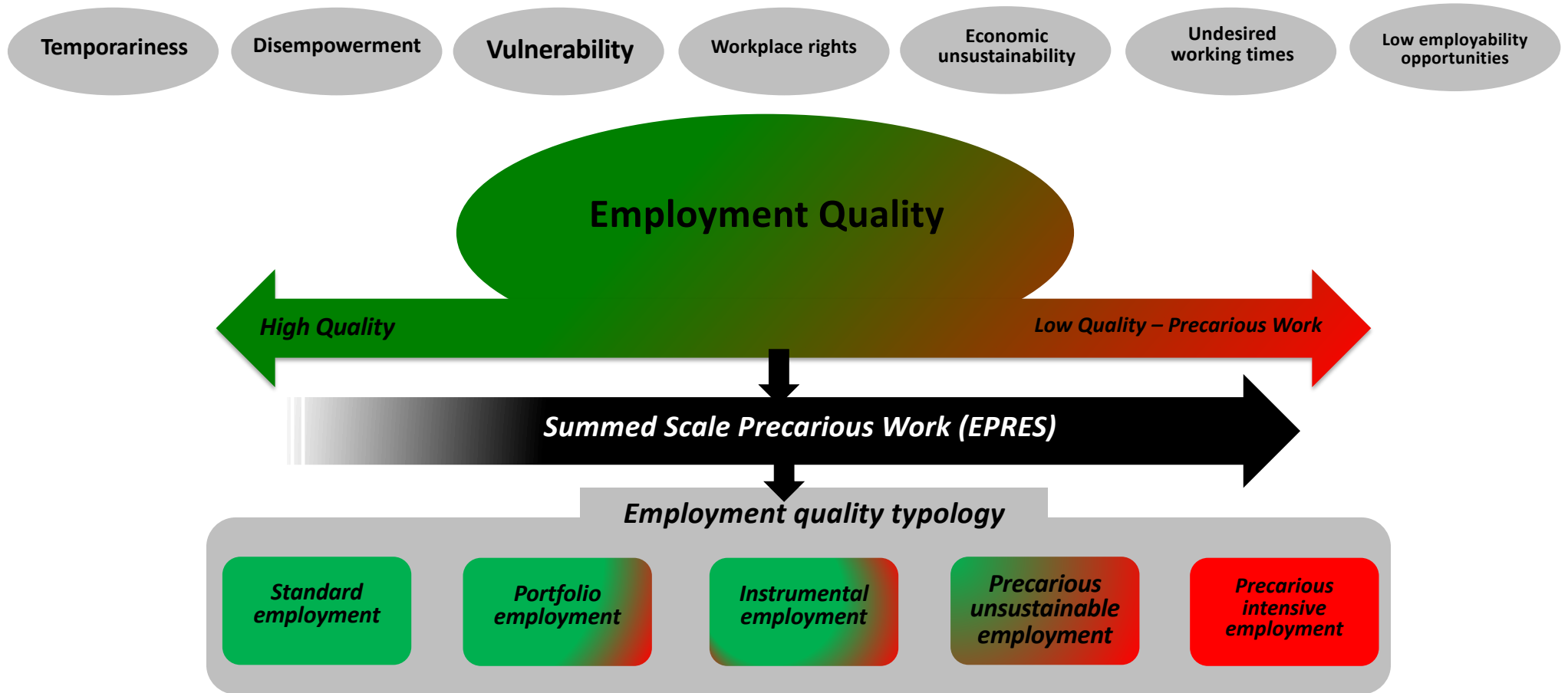
Making Sense of the Transformation: Concepts

- Concepts to grasp into ‘flexibilization’ and ‘de-standardisation’
 - Employment quality:
 - *... a multi-dimensional construct, grasping into different features of the employment conditions and relations, including the stability and controllability of contracts, level and stability of wages, working hours (amount, timing, discretion), access to social rights, future employability, collective bargaining, interindividual relations (with hierarchy).*
 - Precarious employment:
 - *... a situation of accumulated unfavourable ‘employment quality characteristics’ that is essentially due to the weak bargaining power of a worker*

Measure de-standardisation

- Using 'pragmatic' proxy-indicators
 - Type of contract, agency work, freelance, part-time
 - Advantages: readily available, common sense logic
 - Disadvantages: reductionist, fragmented view of reality, difficult to compare cross-nationally
- Subjective approaches (job/employment insecurity)
 - Confusion of cause and effect
 - Interference of preferences, personality, culture, ...
- Multi-dimensional approaches
 - Summed scales (see Lewchuk, 2016; Vives et al, 2011; Leschke et al. 2008)
 - Typological approach: constructing a typology (see Van Aerden et al, 2014)

Employment Quality and Precarious Work



Reference: Vanroelen, C., Julià, M., & Van Aerden, K. (2021). Precarious Employment: An Overlooked Determinant of Workers' Health and Well-Being? In *Flexible Working Practices and Approaches* (pp. 231–255). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74128-0_12

Cluster versus Summed approaches

Figure 1 Mean employment precariousness score per country and distribution of 20% most precarious respondents over the EU27

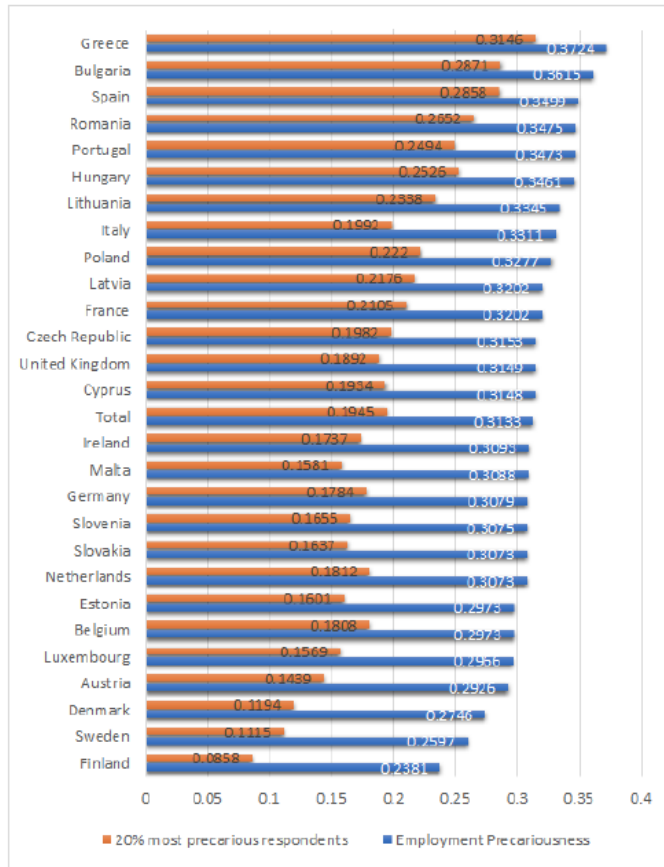
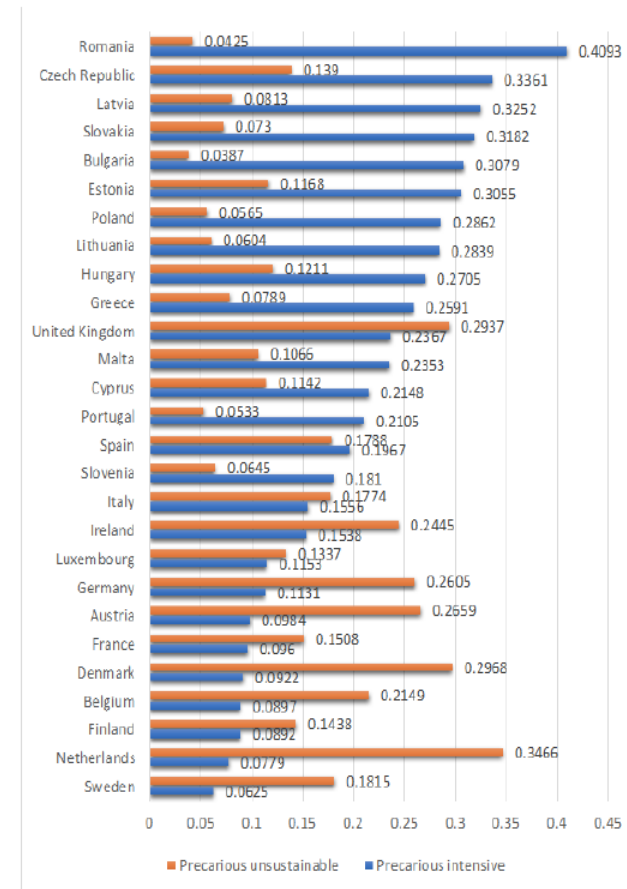


Figure 2 Cross-national distribution of the precarious job types in the typology (%)

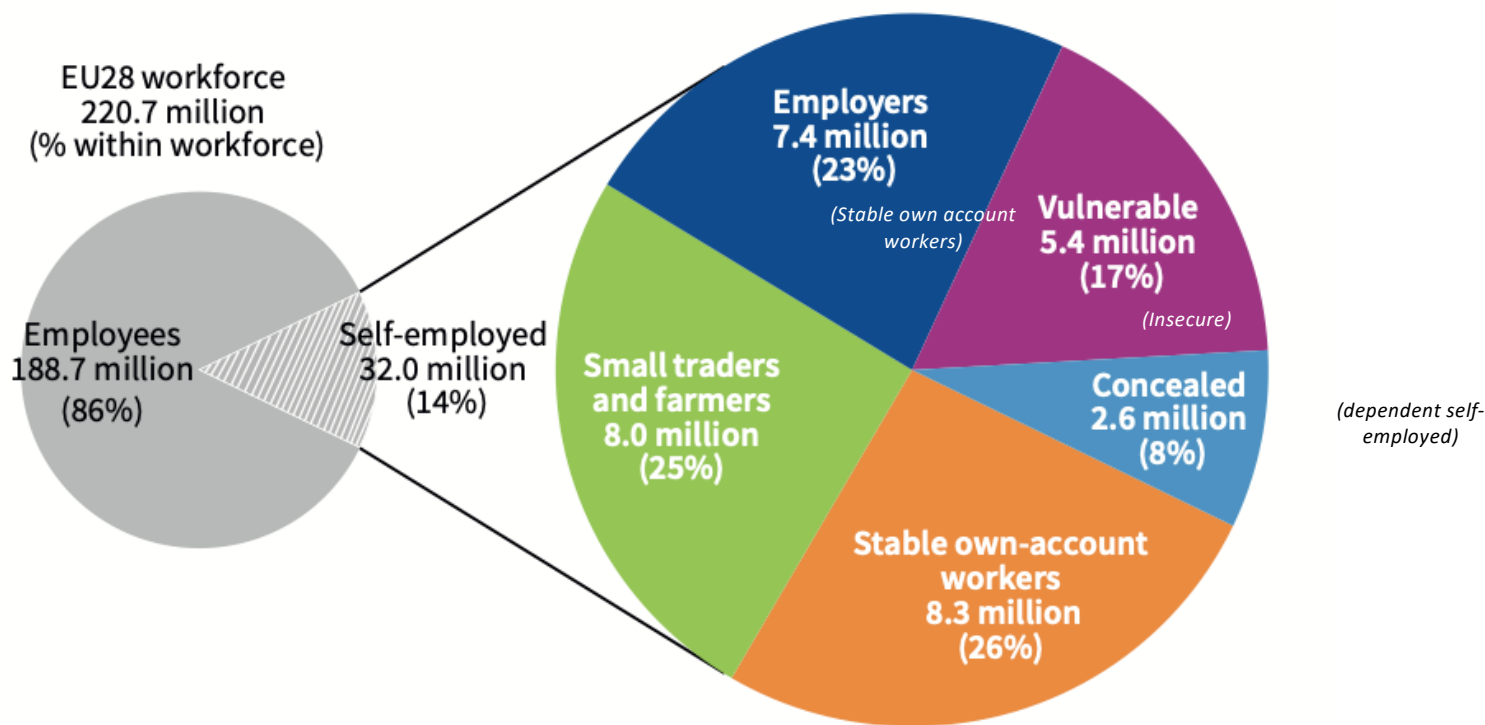


Source: Van Aerden, K. (2018). Contemporary employment arrangements in Europe and their relation with workers' well-being. Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels.

Employment quality among the self-employed

Figure 10: Main reasons for self-employment

Note: naming differences between the EUROFOUND labels and ours (our original names between brackets)



Policy agenda

Policy agenda

- Possible solutions to counter job quality polarisation and increase sustainable employment:
 - Regulate the contingent sector:
 - Equal pay for equal work clauses
 - Improve social protection
 - Increase OHS-efficacy
 - Stimulate investment at the bottom of the labour market:
 - Training premiums (now: pro-top bias)
 - Innovative work organisation: functional instead of temporal flexibility
 - Stimulate insourcing (public sector)

Policy agenda

- Possible solutions to counter job quality polarisation and increase sustainable employment:
 - Stimulating the not-for-profit economy
 - The social economy
 - Alternative economic models (e.g. cooperations)
 - Stimulate sustainable business models
 - Strengthen labour unions
 - EU-countries: strong correlation between union density, job quality, precarious employment
 - European pillar of social rights
 - Differentiated retirement ages
 - Precarious employment as a recognized risk-factor